



Year 2004



Progress Report of Activities

Issued April 2005

James E. 'Bud' Smith Plant Materials Center, Knox City, Texas

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Who We Are

The James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center (PMC) at Knox City, Texas, was established in late 1964 and is one of 27 Centers located throughout the United States. The Center is responsible for developing conservation plants and cultural techniques for use on targeted Major Land Resource Areas (MLRA) in Texas and Oklahoma.

The area served in Texas includes all or portions of nine MLRAs ranging in size from 800,000 acres to over 23 million acres. The area served in southwestern Oklahoma comprises parts of five MLRAs in 27 counties totaling over 16 million acres.

The Center is located approximately 4 miles NW of Knox City, Texas, in the Rolling Red Plains Land Resource Area.

The mission of the Plant Materials Program is to develop and transfer effective state-of-the-art plant science technology to meet customer and resource needs. Plant and technology development objectives of the Knox City PMC include:

- Erosion Control - wind and water
- Range and Pasture Improvement
- Wildlife Habitat Improvement
- Water Quality

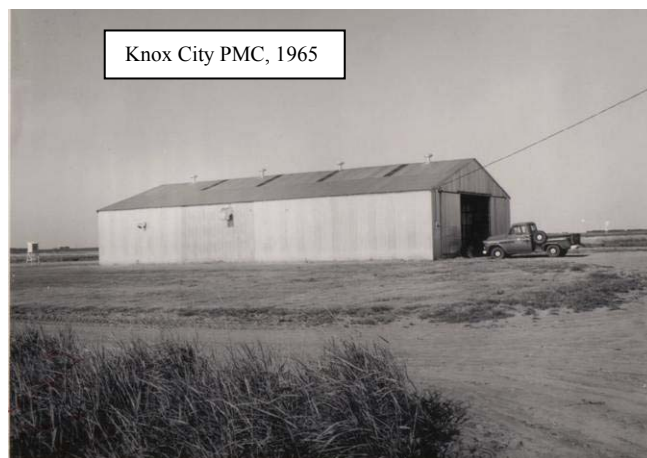
Following is a highlight of Center's 40 Year Anniversary and Field Day Celebration.

Center Celebrates 40 Years

The Past 40 Year 1964 to 2004

Late in 1964 the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) set up a Plant Material Center (PMC) near Knox City, Texas, on 60 acres of irrigated farmland leased from Mr. Tom Campbell.

In the early days the Soil Conservation Service operated a network of field nurseries. From 1934 up until about 1953 SCS nurseries were operated much like our modern day plant materials centers. The big task of the nurseries was to provide grass seed critically needed to restore land damaged by the drought and wind erosion of the 1930's



The first major native grass seed harvest in history was made by nursery personnel in late 1935 from prairie rangelands in Texas and eastern New Mexico.

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More than 50,000 pounds of blue grama seed were harvested with bluegrass seed strippers.



From these early efforts plant scientist soon learned that conventional farm combines could be easily modified to harvest many of the desired native species. These early developments helped solve the seed supply problem, but it was only a partial solution.

Other hurdles facing the early SCS technicians included proper seedbed preparation, dates and rates of seeding, and equipment suitable for planting grasses under range and pasture conditions. All of these items were worked out by 1938 and the basic techniques are still in use today with only minor modifications.

As SCS nurseries were phased out in the mid 50's the Plant Materials Program as we know it today came into existence.

The Knox City Plant Materials Center was the first modern day plant materials center established in Texas. Today there are three plant center serving Texas and parts of adjoining states. Besides Knox City there are centers at Nacogdoches in East Texas, and Kingsville in South Texas.

An early figure in the SCS plant science arena was James E. "Bud" Smith. Bud was involved in many of the new technologies coming out of the program, and on September 7, 1967 the Knox City PMC was given the honorary name of the James E. "Bud" Smith Plant Materials Center in honor of Bud's dedicated service in early plant science work from 1935 up until 1965.

Today the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Knox City PMC is part of a network of 27 plant materials centers located around the United

States. This includes one new PMC established in 2004 at Fallon, Nevada.

The primary area of service of the Plant Materials Center at Knox City is central, west and north Texas and southwestern Oklahoma. Each center serves an area comprising several mayor land resource divisions, but it doesn't stop here. Like all plant materials centers work being done at the Knox City PMC is coordinated with that being evaluated at other locations across the country.

Like in the days of the early SCS nurseries questions arise dealing with plants.

Today the modern NRCS Plant Materials Center is an integral part of finding the solution to the problem we face in modern agriculture.



Today droughts, overgrazing, wildlife habitat improvement, water quality improvement, and re-establishment of critical areas are just a few of the issues the Knox City program must deal with.

Since its establishment in 1964 the Center has released on it own or in cooperation with others 32 improved varieties of plants, including many grasses, forbs, legumes, shrubs, and trees. Cooperating with other partners and prior to the establishment of the Knox City Center, Texas - NRCS was involved with 7 other conservation plant releases which are also credited to the Knox City program.

As we move into a new era of thinking about conservation the Knox City Plant Materials Center will continue to develop new plant releases and plant science technology to provide customers the tools they need to manage their natural resources.

Field Day Highlights



"Welcome Sign" This sign was first used at the 1967 dedication of the Knox City PMC.



Wagon tours allowed visitors to see plant evaluations and production fields on the center.



Dr. Larry Butler, State Conservationist introduces noon time speaker, Barry Mahler, President of the Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts.



Steve Brown, Director, Texas Foundation Seed Service, receives recognition from Dr. Butler for his work promoting and marketing plant materials releases



Kent Ferguson, Zone 5 Rangeland Management Specialist receives recognition from Dr. Butler for a plant collection that resulted in a release.



Tony Baeza, DC Breckenridge, and David Sikes, DC Aspermont discuss foundation seed production at the center.



Steve Nelle, Zone 2 Wildlife Biologist discusses native legumes for wildlife.



Jake Garrison,
KCPMC Manager
1969-1974



Arnold Davis, the 1st Knox City PMC Manager,
1965-1966



Always a bunch of hungry folks at a field day.



Harvesting 'Texoka' buffalo grass with flail harvester, 1969.



Lynn Pace (L), TX Parks and Wildlife employee stationed at Knox City PMC assists David Lorenz (PMC Manager 1974-1984) with rod row planting.